

The One Mind

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Silvia and Marta Landa were four-year-old identical twins who lived in the village of Murillo de Río Leza in northern Spain. One day in 1976 their father took Silvia to visit grandparents, who lived several miles away. Marta, the other twin, insisted on staying home and helping her mother with household chores. In doing so, Marta burned her hand on a hot clothes iron, causing a large red blister, a second-degree burn, to erupt. At the same time, miles away, an identical blister formed on Silvia's hand. Silvia was taken to the doctor, unaware of what had happened to her sister Marta. When the two little girls were united, their parents saw that the blisters were the same size and on the same part of the same hand. The twins became local celebrities after being featured in their local newspaper. Word spread, and a team of nine psychologists, psychiatrists, and physicians from Madrid thoroughly investigated the happening, with the consent of the twins and their parents.¹

Research suggests that only around twenty percent of identical twins respond in this way, and most such cases occur in non-twins. The prerequisite seems to be profound emotional closeness between the individuals involved — most often mothers and children, bonded spouses, lovers, and close friends.

THE PEDIGREE OF THE IDEA:

Since time immemorial reports have surfaced suggesting a link between distant individuals who are beyond the reach of sensory-based communication. Such a connection might permit the sharing of not only physical phenomena, such as the above example in identical twins, but the commingling of thoughts and emotions in general. This channel might take the form of a universal, One Mind that subsumes and unites all individual minds. This possibility is threaded from antiquity through the present. As Plato wrote, “[H]uman nature was originally One and we were a whole.”²

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¹ Guy Lyon Playfair. *Twin Telepathy: The Psychic Connection*. London, UK: Vega; 2002: 11-35.

² Plato. Quoted in: Wilber K. *Eye to Eye: The Quest for the New Paradigm*. Garden City, NY: Anchor/Doubleday; 1983: 234

Hippocrates stated, “There is one common flow, one common breathing, all things are in sympathy.”³ Pico della Mirandola, the Renaissance philosopher, believed that the world is governed by a “unity whereby one creature is united with the others and all parts of the world constitute one world.”⁴ In the 19th century, the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel called distant mental exchanges between humans “the magic tie.” He believed that “the intuitive spirit oversteps the confines of time and space; it beholds things remote; things long past, and things to come.”⁵

Arthur Schopenhauer, also in 19th-century Germany, suggested that a single event could figure in two or more different chains of circumstance, linking the fates of different individuals in profound ways. He believed in a form of communication that took place between humans during dreams.⁶ Walt Whitman, America’s nineteenth-century bard, proclaimed, “All these separations and gaps shall be taken up and hook’d and link’d together... Nature and Man shall be disjoin’d and diffused no more....”⁷ His contemporary, philosopher-essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson, wrote, “There is one mind common to all individual men...[a] universal mind....” Emerson called this universal mind the Over-soul which, he said, is “that unity...within which every man’s particular being is contained and made one with all other....[W]ithin man is the soul of the whole...the eternal ONE.”⁸

Among the poets in Emerson’s camp was William Butler Yeats: “[T]he borders of our minds are ever shifting, and ... many minds can flow into one another... and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.... [T]he borders of our memories are ... shifting, and... our memories are part of one great memory....”⁹

Swiss psychiatrist Carl G. Jung’s concept of the collective unconscious and the collective conscious paralleled the views of Emerson and Yeats. These various observers seem to be saying that everything is connected, including minds.

³ Hippocrates. Quoted in: Watson L. *Dreams of Dragons*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books; 1992: 27.

⁴ della Mirandola P. Quoted in: Watson L. *Dreams of Dragons*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books; 1992: 27.

⁵ G. W. F. Hegel. Quoted in: Inglis B. *Natural and Supernatural*. Bridport, Dorset, UK. Prism Press; 1992: 158.

⁶ Lyall Watson. *Dreams of Dragons*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books; 1992: 27.

⁷ Walt Whitman. *Passage to India*. Quoted in: Nicholson DHS, Lee AHE, eds. *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse*. Oxford, UK: The Clarendon Press, 1917. Bartleby.com. <http://www.bartleby.com/236/>. Accessed 10 June, 2015.

⁸ Ralph Waldo Emerson. *The Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Illustrated, reprint, revised edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; 1987. 160.

⁹ W.B. Yeats. Quoted in: D. Pierce (ed). *Irish Writing in the Twentieth Century*. Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press; 2000: 62.

WHAT PHYSICISTS HAVE SAID

It is not widely known that some of the greatest physicists of the twentieth century were aligned with the concept of a single, collective form of consciousness. Astrophysicist Sir James Jeans observed, “When we view ourselves in space and time, our consciousnesses are obviously the separate individuals of a particle-picture, but when we pass beyond space and time, they may perhaps form ingredients of a single continuous stream of life. As it is with light and electricity, so it may be with life; the phenomena may be individuals carrying on separate existences in space and time, while in the deeper reality beyond space and time we may be all members of one body.”¹⁰

Erwin Schrödinger, whose wave equations lie at the heart of quantum physics and who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1933, wrote, “To divide or multiply consciousness is something meaningless. In all the world, there is no kind of framework within which we can find consciousness in the plural; this is simply something we construct because of the spatio-temporal plurality of individuals, but it is a false construction.... The category of *number*, of *whole* and of *parts* are then simply not applicable to it.¹¹ ...The overall number of minds is just one.... In truth there is only one mind.¹² [I]nconceivable as it seems to ordinary reason, you — and all other conscious beings as such — are all in all. Hence this life of yours which you are living is not merely a piece of the entire existence, but is in a certain sense the *whole*; only this whole is not so constituted that it can be surveyed in one single glance.”¹³

The eminent physicist David Bohm agreed, observing, “If we don’t establish these absolute boundaries between minds, then it’s possible they could...unite as one mind....Deep down the consciousness of mankind is one. This is a virtual certainty... and if we don’t see this it’s because we are blinding ourselves to it.”¹⁴ Bohm and his colleague Basil Hiley further stated, “The notion of a separate organism is clearly an abstraction, as is also its boundary. Underlying all this is unbroken wholeness even though our civilization has developed in such a way as to strongly emphasize the separation into parts.”¹⁵

¹⁰ Sir James Jeans. *Physics and Philosophy*. New York, NY: Dover; 1981: 204.

¹¹ Erwin Schrödinger. *My View of the World*. Woodbridge, CT: Ox Bow Press; 1983: 31-34

¹² Erwin Schrödinger. *What is Life? and Mind and Matter*. London, UK: Cambridge University Press; 1969: 139, 145.

¹³ Erwin Schrödinger. *My View of the World*. (Cecily Hastings, trans.) Reprint edition. Woodbridge, CT: Ox Bow Press; 1983: 21-22.

¹⁴ David Bohm. Quoted in: Renée Weber. *Dialogues with Scientists and Sages*. New York, NY: Routledge & Kegan Paul; 1986: 41.

¹⁵ David Bohm and Basil J. Hiley. *The Undivided Universe*. Reprint edition. London, UK: Routledge; 1995: 389.

EXPERIMENTS AND EXPERIENCES

Why take seriously the possibility of the One Mind? There are two main reasons. First, people have *experiences* in which minds interact and share information at great distances and outside the present. They could not do this if minds were isolated. If these experiences are valid, minds must in some way be connected for them to occur. Second, there are hundreds of actual *experiments* that confirm these interactions. So: *experience* and *experiments* show that our minds are connected in ways that transcend separateness.

In recent decades, experimentalists have subjected to rigorous testing the idea that minds might communicate as if they are united. Consciousness researcher Stephan A. Schwartz describes six areas of research whose findings have been replicated in labs around the world, each area of research giving odds against chance of around a billion to one, or combined odds against chance of 10^{54} to one, an astronomical number. These bodies of research, too complex to describe in detail here, include remote viewing (the synchrony of distant individual minds); mental influence on the output of random number generators; the Global Consciousness Project, which tracks the behavior of globally distributed random number generators in response to specific events; presentiment (unconscious physiological responses to future stimuli); precognition (the knowledge of future happenings); and Ganzfeld (a type of information sharing between two individuals, one of whom is sensory deprived). Why aren't these replicated findings uniformly embraced in contemporary science? Schwartz: "The objection is fundamentally cultural, not scientific. ...[T]he data will not be denied forever, and a new paradigm is emerging."¹⁶

“BEATS THE HECK OUT OF ME”

The materialistic concept of consciousness that currently is widely accepted prohibits One-Mind phenomena. Materialism asserts that consciousness is somehow produced by the brain and is confined to the brain, the body, and the present. This view of consciousness has become so hegemonic that it is almost heretical in some circles to question it. However, this view of consciousness suffers from two severe defects: the sheer poverty of evidence that brains produce consciousness, and the enormous human costs of a world that is sanitized of a spiritual outlook, which the materialist dogma forbids.

¹⁶ Stephan A. Schwartz. Six Protocols, Neuroscience, and Near Death: An Emerging Paradigm Incorporating Nonlocal Consciousness. *Explore*. 2015; 11 (4): 252-260. [http://www.explorejournal.com/article/S1550-8307\(15\)00076-2/pdf](http://www.explorejournal.com/article/S1550-8307(15)00076-2/pdf).

No human has ever seen a brain or anything else produce consciousness, and there is no accepted theory as to how this *could* happen. The link between a brain and consciousness is as mysterious today as it was when Thomas Henry Huxley wrote in 1886: "How it is that anything so remarkable as a state of consciousness comes about as a result of irritating nervous tissue, is just as unaccountable as the appearance of the djinn when Aladdin rubbed his lamp in the story."¹⁷ The weakness of the brain-makes-consciousness dogma has become obvious to an increasing number of top-tier scientists, as the following comments demonstrate. In a genuine test of your patience, I now include several examples from scholars. I wish to emphasize that these are not rare, isolated opinions, and that the materialist view of consciousness is empirically bankrupt.

Steven A. Pinker, experimental psychologist at Harvard University, on how consciousness might arise from something physical, such as the brain, stated, "Beats the heck out of me. I have some prejudices, but no idea of how to begin to look for a defensible answer. And neither does anyone else."¹⁸

Donald D. Hoffman, cognitive scientist at University of California, Irvine: "The scientific study of consciousness is in the embarrassing position of having no scientific theory of consciousness."¹⁹ Stuart A. Kauffman, theoretical biologist and complex-systems researcher: "Nobody has the faintest idea what consciousness is.... I don't have any idea. Nor does anybody else, including the philosophers of mind."²⁰ Roger W. Sperry, Nobel Prize-winning neurophysiologist: "Those centermost processes of the brain with which consciousness is presumably associated are simply not understood. They are so far beyond our comprehension at present that no one I know of has been able even to imagine their nature."²¹ Eugene P. Wigner, Nobel Prize winner in physics: "We have at present not even the vaguest idea how to connect the physio-chemical processes with the state of mind."²²

¹⁷ T. H. Huxley. Quoted in: McGinn C. *The Mysterious Flame*. New York, NY: Basic Books; 1999:16.

¹⁸ Steven Pinker. *How the Mind Works*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton; 1997: 146

¹⁹ Donald Hoffman. Consciousness and the mind-body problem. *Mind & Matter*. 2008; 6(1): 87-121.

²⁰ Stuart Kauffman. God enough. Interview of Stuart Kauffman by Steve Paulson. Salon.com. http://www.salon.com/env/atoms_edden/2008/11/19/stuart_kauffman/index1.html. November 19, 2008. Accessed January 30, 2010.

²¹ Roger Sperry. Quoted in: Denis Brian, *Genius Talk: Conversations with Nobel Scientists and Other Luminaries*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers; 1995: 367.

²² Eugene P. Wigner. Are We Machines? *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*. 1969; 113 (2): 95-101. Jstor.org. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/985959>. Accessed February 2, 2010.

Physicist Nick Herbert, an expert in nonlocality: “Science’s biggest mystery is the nature of consciousness. It is not that we possess bad or imperfect theories of human awareness; we simply have no such theories at all. About all we know about consciousness is that it has something to do with the head, rather than the foot.”²³ Theoretical physicist and mathematician Freeman J. Dyson: “The origin of life is a total mystery, and so is the existence of human consciousness. We have no clear idea how the electrical discharges occurring in nerve cells in our brains are connected with our feelings and desires and actions.”²⁴

Philosopher Jerry A. Fodor, of Rutgers University: “Nobody has the slightest idea how anything material could be conscious. Nobody even knows what it would be like to have the slightest idea about how anything material could be conscious. So much for the philosophy of consciousness.”²⁵

Philosopher John R. Searle, of the University of California, Berkeley: “At the present state of the investigation of consciousness we *don’t know* how it works and we need to try all kinds of different ideas.”²⁶

Theoretical and mathematical physicist Sir Roger Penrose: “My position [on consciousness] demands a major revolution in physics.... I’ve come to believe that there is something very fundamental missing from current science.... Our understanding at this time is not adequate and we’re going to have to move to new regions of science....”²⁷ Nobel laureate Niels Bohr, one of the patriarchs of quantum physics: “We can admittedly find nothing in physics or chemistry that has even a remote bearing on consciousness.... [Q]uite apart from the laws of physics and chemistry, as laid down in quantum theory, we must also consider laws of quite a different kind.”²⁸ Werner Heisenberg, Nobel laureate in physics and Bohr’s contemporary, similarly observed: “There can be no doubt that ‘consciousness’ does not occur in physics and chemistry, and I cannot see how it could possibly result from quantum mechanics.”²⁹

²³ Nick Herbert. *Quantum Reality*. New York, NY: Anchor/Doubleday; 1987: 249

²⁴ Freeman Dyson. How we know. *The New York Review of Books*. March 10, 2011; LVIII (4): 8-12.

²⁵ Jerry Fodor. The big idea: Can there be a science of mind? *Times Literary Supplement*. July 3, 1992: 5-7.

²⁶ John Searle. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*. 1995;2(1): Quotation on front cover.

²⁷ Roger Penrose. Quoted in: Giberson K. The man who fell to earth. Interview with Roger Penrose. *Science & Spirit*. March/April 2003; 34-41. Available at: uits.arizona.edu. <http://quantum.webhost.uits.arizona.edu/prod/sites/default/files/The%20Man%20Who%20Fell%20to%20Earth.pdf>. Accessed 7 April, 2015.

²⁸ Niels Bohr. Quoted in Heisenberg W. *Physics and Beyond*. (A.J. Pomerans, trans.) New York: Harper and Row;1971:88-91.

²⁹ Werner Heisenberg. *Physics and Beyond*. A. J. Pomerans, trans. New York, NY: Harper and Row;1971:114.

Sir John C. Eccles, the Nobel Prize-winning neurophysiologist: "I maintain that the human mystery is incredibly demeaned by scientific reductionism, with its claim to account for all of the spiritual world in terms of patterns of neuronal activity. This belief must be classed as a superstition. We have to recognize that we are spiritual beings with souls existing in a spiritual world as well as material beings with bodies and brains existing in a material world."³⁰

Pioneer neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield: "It will always be quite impossible to explain the mind on the basis of neuronal action within the brain.... Although the content of consciousness depends in large measure on neuronal activity, awareness itself does not.... To me, it seems more and more reasonable to suggest that the mind may be a distinct and different essence."³¹

Physicist Charles H. Townes, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for his work with laser devices: "[T]here seems to be no justification for the dogmatic position taken by some that the remarkable phenomenon of individual human personality can be expressed completely in terms of the known laws governing the behavior of atoms and molecules."³² Neurophysiologist William H. Calvin, of the University of Washington: "Consciousness, in any of its varied connotations, certainly isn't located down in the basement of chemistry or the subbasement of physics.... [These] consciousness physicists use mathematical concepts to dazzle rather than enlighten.... Such theorists usually avoid the word 'spirit' and say something about quantum fields.... All that the consciousness physicists have accomplished is the replacement of one mystery with another."³³

Sir John Maddox, the editor for 22 years of the prestigious journal *Nature*: "What consciousness consists of ... is ... a puzzle. Despite the marvelous successes of neuroscience in the past century... we seem as far from understanding cognitive process as we were a century ago."³⁴

³⁰ John C. Eccles. *Evolution of the Brain, Creation of the Self*. New York, NY: Routledge; 1991: 241.

³¹ Wilder Penfield. *The Mystery of the Mind: A Critical Study of Consciousness and the Human Brain*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; 1975: 79-81.

³² Charles Townes. Gathering of the realms: the convergence of science and religion. *Science & Spirit*. 1999;10(1):18-19

³³ W. H. Calvin. *How Brains Think: Evolving Intelligence, Then and Now*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1996: 36.

³⁴ John Maddox. The unexpected science to come. *Scientific American*. 1999;281(6):62-7.

WHY THE CONNECTIONS?

If you made it through the previous section, congratulations! Now let's ask: Why would humans have developed a unitary, collective form of consciousness that permits the sharing of experiences and information as if the barriers of space and time do not exist? What is the evolutionary benefit of having no fundamental boundaries or limits to consciousness? Are we better off if individual minds can merge with all other minds to form a One Mind? If thoughts, emotions, feelings, and cognition can be shared? If we are literally of One Mind?

An obvious advantage is that the sharing of information frequently warns another of impending danger. This ability imparts a decided survival advantage to the individuals possessing it. I explored this aspect of consciousness at length in my book *The Power of Premonitions*.³⁵

Another approach to these questions is to ask, What is the experience of the One Mind like? The overwhelming answer from those who learn to traverse this domain is that the experience of the One Mind involves a direct apprehension of the universe and all in it as being One, with no fundamental dividing lines or divisions in it. Everything seems connected with everything else. Partition and separation are illusions. This experience carries with it the sense that one has apprehended Truth, the way things really are, and is accompanied by a feeling of joy, compassion and love. A sense of being connected with all others and with all sentient life has been recognized throughout human history as a source of immense joy and fulfillment. Solitary mystics notwithstanding, unity and connectedness with others have generally been a highly prized goal of the great wisdom traditions. Abundant contemporary evidence shows that rich social networks and interaction are good for our health, and that protracted, continual isolation is terrible for health, happiness, and longevity. We are not designed to be alone. Perhaps that is why people who tune in to the One Mind are more likely to be happier, healthier, wiser, and more creative. These patterns are evidenced in the research of social epidemiologist Jeff Levin, who pioneered the field called the epidemiology of religion, and his colleagues.³⁶
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³⁵ Larry Dossey. *The Power of Premonitions*. New York, NY: Dutton; 2009.

³⁶ Jeffrey S. Levin J. *God, Faith, and Health*. New York, NY. John Wiley & Sons; 2001.

³⁷ Jeffrey S. Levin. God, love, and health: findings from a clinical study." *Review of Religious Research*. March 2001;42(3):277-293.

IMMORTALITY

Yet, there is an even greater advantage associated with the One Mind. As a physician, I believe that the terror of annihilation with physical death has caused more suffering in human history than all the physical diseases combined. The One Mind involves a form of unitary consciousness that is nonlocal — that is, a consciousness that is boundless in space, therefore omnipresent, and infinite in time, therefore immortal and eternal. The nonlocal One Mind, then, is a potential cure for the greatest of all diseases, the dread of total annihilation with physical death.

Total destruction of personhood with physical death is an inescapable part of the materialism package. Therefore, the doctrine of materialism, which insists that consciousness is produced by the brain and dies with it, comes with enormous human costs that are vastly underestimated by the cheerleaders of materialism. Jung viewed this as a calamitous situation, saying, “The decisive question for man is: Is he related to something infinite or not? That is the telling question of his life.”³⁸ If consciousness is produced by the brain and vanishes with physical death, as materialists insist, then any meaningful relationship to “something infinite” is a chimera. Novelist George Orwell also decried this morbid outlook, saying, “The major problem of our time is the decay of belief in personal immortality.”³⁹ Jung felt so strongly about this issue that he made it a principle in therapy with his patients. “As a doctor,” he said, “I make every effort to strengthen the belief in immortality....”⁴⁰

Immortality for the mind was a key feature of physicist Erwin Schrödinger’s vision. He wrote, “I venture to call it [the mind] indestructible since it has a peculiar time-table, namely mind is always *now*. There is really no before and after for the mind. There is only now that includes memories and expectations.”⁴¹ We may, or so I believe, assert that physical theory in its present stage strongly suggests the indestructibility of Mind by Time.”⁴²

³⁸ C. G. Jung. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. New York, NY: Random House; 1965:325.

³⁹ George Orwell. Quoted in: Banville J. Good man, bad world. *The New York Review*. November 6, 2003; L(17): 62-65.

⁴⁰ C. G. Jung. *The Symbolic Life. Collected Works*. R.F.C. Hull (trans.) Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; 1976; Vol. 13, paragraph. 68.

⁴¹ Erwin Schrödinger. *What is Life? and Mind and Matter*. London, UK: Cambridge University Press; 1969: 145.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 165.

Some spiritual teachers insist that the belief in survival beyond physical death is linked to planetary survival. Buddhist scholar Sogyal Rinpoche, author of *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*: “Believing fundamentally that this life is the only one, modern people have developed no long-term vision...So there is nothing to restrain them from plundering the planet for their own immediate ends and from living in a selfish way that could prove fatal for the future.”⁴³ Simply put, materialism, mindless consumerism, and environmental debauchery are exacerbated by a denial of immortality, a key feature of a temporally nonlocal One Mind.

SPIRITUALITY

The concept of the One Mind helps restore to life a sense of spirituality, the sense that we are connected with something higher than the individual self and ego, however named. Sir John Eccles, the Nobel Prize-winning neurophysiologist, expressed this importance:

*Science has gone too far in breaking down man’s belief in his spiritual greatness... and has given him the belief that he is merely an insignificant animal that has arisen by chance and necessity in an insignificant planet lost in the great cosmic immensity.... The principal trouble with mankind today is that the intellectual leaders are too arrogant in their self-sufficiency. We must realize the great unknowns in the material makeup and operation of our brains, in the relationship of brain to mind, in our creative imagination, and in the uniqueness of the psyche. When we think of these unknowns as well as the unknown of how we come to be in the first place, we should be much more humble.*⁴⁴

CREATIVITY

The One Mind can be a source of great wisdom and creativity, because it implies an infinite pool of information that we can learn to access. Many famous artists and scientists have apparently done this throughout history. Physicalistic, brain-bound models of the mind fail to explain, for example, the mind-boggling feats of savants, who are often severely mentally impaired and unable to read or acquire information in conventional ways. But if all individual minds are connected with one another and to a domain of consciousness that transcends personal limits, an individual might have access to all conceivable knowledge, past, present, and future. As Emerson expressed this possibility:

⁴³ Sogyal Rinpoche. *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. Harper San Francisco; 1992: 8.

⁴⁴ John Eccles and Daniel N. Robinson. *The Wonder of being Human: Our Brain & Our Mind*. Boston: Shambhala; 1984: 178.

*There is one mind common to all individual men.... What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done....*⁴⁵

The eminent twentieth-century quantum physicist Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker echoed Emerson: “[In any great discovery] we find the often disturbing and happy experience: ‘It is not I; I have not done this.’ Still, in a certain way it is I — yet not the ego ...but...a more comprehensive self.”⁴⁶

This access to deep knowing is particularly dramatic when it occurs in children. Developmental psychologist Joseph Chilton Pearce reports a striking example of creativity in his five-year-old son, which suggests that childhood wisdom may come from the “outside.” When he was in his early thirties, teaching humanities in a college, he was engrossed in theology and the psychology of Carl Jung. Pearce describes himself as “obsessed” by the nature of the God-human relationship, and his reading on the subject was extensive. One morning as he was preparing for an early class, his five-year-old son came into his room, sat down on the edge of the bed, and launched into a twenty-minute discourse on the nature of God and man. Pearce was astonished. He states: “He spoke in perfect, publishable sentences, without pause or haste, and in a flat monotone. He used complex theological terminology and told me, it seemed, everything there was to know. As I listened, astonished, the hair rose on my neck; I felt goose bumps, and, finally, tears streamed down my face. I was in the midst of the uncanny, the inexplicable. My son’s ride to kindergarten arrived, horn blowing, and he got up and left. I was unnerved and arrived late to my class. What I had heard was awesome, but too vast and far beyond any concept I had had to that point. The gap was so great I could remember almost no details and little of the broad panorama he had presented.... He wasn’t picking up his materials from me. I hadn’t acquired anything like what he described and would, in fact, be in my mid-fifties and involved in meditation before I did.... My son had no recollection of the event.”⁴⁷

We get additional glimpses of this process from famous exemplars who claim to have intentionally employed it. An example is Thomas Edison, America’s great inventor, who stated: “People say I have created things. I have never created anything. I get impressions from the Universe at large and work them out, but I am only a plate on a

⁴⁵ Ralph Waldo Emerson. *Emerson: Essays and Lectures*. New York, NY: Literary Classics of the United States; 1841: 227.

⁴⁶ C. F. von Weizsäcker. Introduction to Gopi Krishna. *The Biological Basis of Religion and Genius*. New York, NY: Harper and Row; 1972: 35-36.

⁴⁷ Joseph Chilton Pearce. *Evolution’s End*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco; 1992: 8-9.

record or a receiving apparatus — what you will. Thoughts are really impressions that we get from outside.”⁴⁸

SWALLOWED UP?

A common objection to the One Mind is the fear of being swallowed up and homogenized in a vast, featureless sea of consciousness in which a sense of individuality and personhood is obliterated. This objection fails on close examination. Those who learn to navigate the One-Mind experience typically describe the opposite reaction: individualism is not destroyed, but it is enhanced, amplified, augmented, intensified, and paradoxically *balanced* with a complementary experience of belongingness. Instead of losing one’s sense of self, there is the joy of belonging to a greater whole, and a sense of rightness in being connected with everything that exists. Here’s how British psychologist David Fontana described this experience: “[It is] an expansion which is not annihilation, not a loss of individuality, but a reality in which the distinction between individuality and unity, as between all opposites, not only disappears but is seen to never truly to have existed.”⁴⁹

And as author Philip Goldberg states in his book *American Veda*: “[O]ne’s sense of ‘I’ and ‘we’ opens out from the narrow identification with family, tribe, race, political affiliation, religion, and so on, to encompass a broader swath of humanity. With that comes a corresponding expansion of the moral compass. This is not a fanciful imagining of ‘we are the world’ harmony but a living experience of unity with other humans, with nature, and ultimately with the cosmos.”⁵⁰

A related form of resistance to unitary, One-Mind consciousness comes from materialistic science itself. Classical science, in its insistence on objectivity, requires individuality and the ability to stand apart from what’s being observed. Without intrinsic separateness, scientific objectivity would not be possible. The Harvard social scientist Philip Slater described some of the problems that flow from this stance in his seminal book *The Wayward Gate*, which I quote at length:

The Tinkertoy habit of pulling the world apart in our heads also creates a sense of eeriness and strangeness when we run into evidence that it’s still working as a whole. Just as if we had chopped an enemy into little pieces and then saw him walking around....

⁴⁸ Thomas Alva Edison. Quoted in: Baldwin N. *Edison: Inventing the Century*. NY: Hyperion; 1995:376.

⁴⁹ David Fontana. *The Meditator’s Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Eastern and Western Meditation Techniques*. Rockport, MA: Element, Inc; 1992: 213.

⁵⁰ Philip Goldberg. *American Veda*. New York, NY: Harmony; 2010: 346.

All these [unitary] phenomena violate our Tinkertoy notions of reality because what happens is independent of the particles themselves. They suggest a larger unity that seems slightly spooky to us because we lack the ability to see ourselves as a part of that unity. Since we like to think of ourselves as separate beings the unification of all other life seems rather overwhelming — a huge conspiracy. Because we leave ourselves out of that conspiracy, we imagine that it must be directed against us.

Paranoia is nothing more than that: an incomplete perception of the unity of life — a half-baked vision in which we become aware of everything outside ourselves, moving together, but are blinded by our narcissism from the realization that we're in on the secret. This is completely voluntary: the ego clings to its sense of isolation, willing to scare itself to pieces rather than acknowledge that it's part of a whole. It blinds itself to that awareness in order to indulge its dreams of glorious detachment. Hence whenever awareness of unity of life breaks through, the ego panics and sees the event as weird, horrifying, "occult...."

The eeriness and uncanniness ... disappear when we accept the unity of life.⁵¹

THE DARK SIDE

Synchronized thinking and shared emotions can be practical and valuable, as with members of an orchestra, a sports team, or a surgical group. Yet there are other situations in which unified thought processes can be disastrous. In 1841 Scottish journalist Charles Mackay's remarkable book *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, still in print, provided a warning of this ominous process. Nazi Germany raised this phenomenon to horrid heights, infecting an entire nation with homicidal madness. Japan's warmongers whipped their nation into a military frenzy in the run-up to World War II with their unspeakably cruel invasion of China prior to Pearl Harbor.

Does the One Mind make these events more likely? I would argue the opposite. The "madness of crowds," when closely examined, is a repudiation of the central One-Mind experience: a focus on unity, compassion, empathy, and caring toward the whole of creation; an awareness of the primacy of love for the planet and its creatures; an impulse toward wellness and health for all. The dangerous, destructive, Trumpian nightmare that currently threatens us comes about not *because* of the One-Mind experience, but *in spite of it*.

⁵¹ Philip Slater. *The Wayward Gate: Science and the Supernatural*. Boston: Beacon Press; 1977: 159-161.

The same can be said of the objection that the One Mind destroys individual initiative and free will, that it leads to helplessness, apathy, and ennui. One reason this objection finds traction in our society is that we have become besotted with the cult of the individual and the belief that we must raise our self up by our own bootstraps, and that anyone who objects to personal initiative is a lay-about and “moocher” or “taker.” Healthy individuality and a sense of personhood are necessary and valuable aspects of the personality coin, but they are only one side of that coin. If individuality is not balanced by a sense of connectivity with others, degradation follows —of society, culture, environment, and life itself. As Philip Slater put it, “Most philosophical and political conflict results from individualistic thinking.... Awareness of the whole is the first necessity, for it’s what we have most deeply lost.”⁵² And as physicist David Bohm stated, “Individuality is only possible if it unfolds from wholeness.”⁵³

SURVIVAL

That long and bedrock certainty of thoughtful men that regardless of the race’s disasters the natural world would go on and on is no longer a certainty.⁵⁴

~ John Graves, *Goodbye to a River*

The realization of our essential unity is our best hope for our survival on Earth. Only by sensing, at the deepest emotional-psychological level, our connections with one another and the Earth itself can we summon the courage necessary to make the tough choices that are required to survive. This realization is about staying alive — saving the Earth and our own skins.

The sense of oneness that accompanies the One-Mind experience suggests that we revise the Golden Rule from the customary “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” to “Be kind to others because in some sense they *are* you.”

Novelist Alice Walker said, “Anything we love can be saved” — including the earth and its creatures, our children, and generations yet unborn. And as W. H. Auden said in the 1930s, as if peering into the present, “We must love one another or die.”⁵⁵

⁵² Philip Slater. *The Wayward Gate: Science and the Supernatural*. Boston: Beacon Press; 1977: 230.

⁵³ David Bohm. Quoted in: Brainyquote.com. https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/david_bohm_388399. Accessed 8 August, 2018

⁵⁴ John Graves. *Goodbye to a River*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf. 1974: 296

⁵⁵ Auden WH. *The English Auden: Poems, Essays and Dramatic Writings, 1927-1939*. (Edward Mendelson, ed.) XLI, “September 1, 1939,” Line 88. (London, 1977: p. 246) In: Anthony Storr. *Solitude*. Citation on p. 208, #6.

Love is an accompaniment of One-Mind participation. Love helps us re-sacralize the world. The love-suffused One-Mind experience offers us a way out of hell — the hell of this particular moment in history where we confront threats to our existence our forebears never imagined — an earth that is being degraded by the sheer fact of our existence, our short-sighted choices, and our materialistic mania. This is a hell from which, beyond a certain point, experts say, there may be no escape. The evidence for our global predicament is based in abundant science, not on some sidewalk lunatic wearing a sandwich board yelling, “The end is near!” Only through willful blindness can one *not* be aware of the challenges we face — global climate change, polluted air and water, mindless consumerism, exploding populations, habitat and species loss, water scarcity, desertification, murderous ideologies, resource depletion, grinding poverty, endless wars of choice, ethnic and religious hatreds, on and on, all abetted by the “I’ve got mine/every man for himself” philosophy with which our society is currently septic.

There is a way of recalibrating our collective response to *all* of these problems, a move that permits a cascade of solutions to fall into place. This approach requires rebooting our ethical and moral stance toward the earth and one another. It is about changing channels, redialing our basic concepts of who we are and how we are related to one another and to the terrestrial crucible that sustains us. I believe the concept of the unitary, collective One Mind, a level of intelligence of which the individual minds of all sentient creatures are a part, is a vision that is powerful enough to make a difference in how we approach *all* the challenges we face — not as a mere intellectual concept, but as something we feel in the deepest way possible. As Hesse said in the prologue to *Demian*, “I have been and still am a seeker, but I no longer seek in stars and books; I have begun to listen to the teachings my blood whispers to me.”⁵⁶

We cannot compel the universal One Mind to do our bidding on command. Still, we are not helpless. Although the One Mind cannot be commanded, it can be invited. We can set the stage for the revelation, the breakthrough. This seeming paradox has been emphasized repeatedly in the world’s great spiritual traditions. As historian of religions Huston Smith says from the Christian tradition, “Everything is a gift, but nothing is free.”⁵⁷ Vivekananda, from the Hindu perspective, agreed: “The wind of God’s grace is always blowing, but you must raise your sail.”⁵⁸ The message from mystical Islam is the same. As the Sufi mystic Bastami said, “The knowledge of God cannot be attained by seeking, but only those who seek it find it.”⁵⁹ And Hafiz, the 14-century Persian poet:

⁵⁶ Herman Hesse. *Demian*. Berlin; S. Fischer Verlag; 1919: prologue.

⁵⁷ Huston Smith. *Forgotten Truth: The Primordial Tradition*. New York, NY: Harper Colophon; 1976: 113.

⁵⁸ Vivekananda. Quoted in: Smith H. *Forgotten Truth: The Primordial Tradition*. New York, NY: Harper Colophon; 1976: 113-114.

⁵⁹ Bastami. Quoted in: Smith H. *Forgotten Truth: The Primordial Tradition*. New York, NY: Harper Colophon; 1976: 114.

*Let's go deeper,
Go deeper.
For, if we do,
Our spirits will embrace
And interweave.
Our union will be so glorious
That even God
Will not be able to tell us apart....⁶⁰*

In the same spirit, Uri Zvi Greenberg, the Israeli poet and journalist said, “Unity of God, unity of the universe and unity of mankind are the spirit which moves Judaism.”⁶¹

During the 20th century we took the mind apart. Now we must put it back together. We've been taught that our mind is fragmented, that it is divided into the conscious, the pre-conscious, the sub-conscious, the unconscious, the ego, the superego, id, and so on. We are divided not just from within, but also from without, from one another. The One Mind looks through the other end of the telescope. It reveals that our individual minds are part of a greater whole, a dimension of consciousness that encompasses all minds — past, present, and future, human and non-human. On this realization our future may depend.

⁶⁰ Hafiz. Quoted in: Daniel Ladinsky. *I Heard God Laughing. Renderings of Hafiz.* Oakland, CA: Mobius Press; 1996.

⁶¹ Uri Zvi Greenberg. Quoted in: Steven Leonard Jacobs. *The Jewish Experience: An Introduction to Jewish History and Jewish Life.* Fortress Press; 2010: 3.

Bio: Dr. Larry Dossey is a licensed Medical Doctor in the United States. Larry is the author of thirteen books and is best known for his book *One Mind: How Our Individual Mind Is Part of a Greater Consciousness and Why It Matters*. Dr. Dossey is the former Executive Editor of the peer-reviewed journal *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*. He is currently Executive Editor of the peer-reviewed journal *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*. This distinguished Texas physician, deeply rooted in the scientific world, has become an internationally influential advocate of the role of the mind in health and the role of spirituality in healthcare. Bringing the experience of a practicing internist and the soul of a poet to the discourse, Dr. Larry Dossey offers panoramic insight into the nature and the future of medicine. An education steeped in traditional Western medicine did not prepare Dr. Dossey for patients who were blessed with "miracle cures," remissions that clinical medicine could not explain. "*Almost all physicians possess a lavish list of strange happenings unexplainable by normal science,*" says Dr. Dossey. "*A tally of these events would demonstrate, I am convinced, that medical science not only has not had the last word, it has hardly had the first word on how the world works, especially when the mind is involved.*"

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